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OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHPO #0074 0561912
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 251912Z FEB 08
FM AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9998
INFO RUEHBE/AMEMBASSY BELMOPAN PRIORITY
RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA PRIORITY 0535
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY 1518
RUEHWN/AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN PRIORITY 1603
RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES PRIORITY 0017
RUEHGE/AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN PRIORITY 2051
RUEHGT/AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA PRIORITY 0030
RUEHKG/AMEMBASSY KINGSTON PRIORITY 0538
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA PRIORITY 0049
RUEHME/AMEMBASSY MEXICO PRIORITY 0090
RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO PRIORITY 0013
RUEHBH/AMEMBASSY NASSAU PRIORITY 0333
RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY 0086
RUEHZP/AMEMBASSY PANAMA PRIORITY 0028
RUEHPU/AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE PRIORITY 0450
RUEHSP/AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN PRIORITY 1851
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO PRIORITY 0032
RUEHSJ/AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE PRIORITY 0446
RUEHSN/AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR PRIORITY 0031
RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO PRIORITY 0020
RUEHDG/AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO PRIORITY 0535
RUEHTG/AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA PRIORITY 0026
RUEHTC/AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE PRIORITY 1638
RUEHUB/USINT HAVANA PRIORITY 0018

UNCLAS PARAMARIBO 000074

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: PARAMARIBO - DEMARCHE: ADVANCING THE US POSITION
FOR CHANGE IN CUBA

REF: 08 STATE 18320

1. (SBU) Regretably, and despite numerous attempts, Ambassador was unable to contact high level GOS Foreign Ministry officials on Sunday, February 24, to deliver reftel demarche points. However, Ambassador did succeed in contacting MFA Permanent Secretary Jane Aarland-Nanhu on February 25. In response to the Ambassador's comments with respect to Cuba's undemocratic leadership transition, PermSec Aarland-Nanhu confirmed that she well understood the USG position with regard to democracy in Cuba. She also agreed that there was no surprise in the announcement that Raul Castro would succeed his brother, Fidel. Ambassador observed that, given Suriname's experience with the 1980's dictatorship of Desi Bouterse, as well as anecdotal evidence that at least some among the Surinamese people recognized that Cuba's leadership transition could not be characterized as "democratic", she hoped that the GOS would include a statement advocating true democracy in Cuba in any post-"election" message that Suriname might send to the GOC.

2. (SBU) In response to the Ambassador's request, PermSec Aarland-Nanhu noted that she would first need to consult with Foreign Minister Kraag-Keteldijk, who has been traveling. The Permanent Secretary promised to advise the Ambassador of the GOS position on any possible statement on democracy in Cuba after her meeting with the Minister.

3. (SBU) Comment: Given past experience, as well as internal GOS politics (the Health Minister, whose political party is a member of the ruling coalition, is especially close to the GOC), it is doubtful that the GOS will see its way clear to issue any statement with respect to democracy in Cuba.

Nevertheless, Post will continue to pursue the issue and
report any developments septel. End Comment.
SCHREIBER HUGHES